

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

16 April 1957

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 23-57

SUBJECT: The Situation in Uganda*

1. Ghana's acquisition of independence and Commonwealth status has stimulated new queries concerning the progress of other African territories under [REDACTED] 25X6A It is likely that in [REDACTED] 25X6A East Africa the protectorate of Uganda will be the first to obtain self-government. Like Ghana, Uganda is relatively prosperous, well-endowed with material resources, and has only a handful of white settlers -- conditions favoring early independence. However, several major obstacles stand in the way of speedy and tranquil progress towards self-government, especially Uganda's lack of national cohesion and political experience, and the influence of events in neighboring areas. How rapidly these obstacles can be dealt with will largely determine whether Uganda can make a peaceful transition to self-government within [REDACTED] 25X6A [REDACTED] 25X6A

* The substance of this memorandum has been discussed informally with OCI.

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2. Uganda's lack of national cohesion largely results from its artificially-imposed boundaries, the special position of the separate native kingdom of Buganda within those borders, and political, social, and economic disparities among various tribal groups. The agreement of 1900 between [REDACTED] and the Kabaka (king) of Buganda established a system of indirect rule whereby chiefs of the well-organized Baganda tribe, the largest and most powerful in Uganda, received protection and subsidies in exchange for native administration of justice and tax collections. The agreement in effect created a landed aristocracy in Buganda. Similar agreements were made with local chiefs in other areas of Uganda where tribal development was sufficiently advanced. In more primitive regions where local leaders were incapable of administering colonial policy, [REDACTED] introduced Baganda chiefs and thereby extended the political influence of Buganda.

3. Buganda's political primacy over the other regions is reinforced by its disproportionate role in Uganda's economy. Its beneficial climate, fertile soil, railroad line to the coast, and possession of the administrative capital combine to make Buganda the most prosperous of the regions. There has been substantial economic development under the [REDACTED] administration. [REDACTED] stimulation of native output of cash

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crops -- especially cotton and coffee, which constitute about 85 percent of total exports -- has resulted in a favorable balance of trade. Buganda produces by far the major portion of such crops, and thus accounts for the country's relative prosperity.

4. On the other hand, economic development now going forward in Uganda may benefit other regions and reduce Buganda's present commanding lead. Uganda possesses extensive lime, copper-cobalt, and other mineral deposits. Exploitation of these deposits is contributing to the diversification of the economy and the development of secondary industries, thus reducing the country's present vulnerability to the fluctuation of world agricultural prices. The western region in particular is likely to experience considerable economic growth, since it contains the bulk of mineral resources; the recent extension of the railroad as far as the Congo border gives access to these resources. Moreover, current plans to make further use of the Victoria Nile hydroelectric potential over the next few years should provide plentiful power resources for all Uganda.

5. Although these prospects in the field of economic development increase the chances for creating a viable national state, at the present time the predominant position of Buganda complicates and hampers

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efforts to grant increased political opportunities to the natives of Uganda as a prelude to national self-government. The situation is similar to that in Ghana and Nigeria, where certain provinces are far more advanced than others but refuse to slow their pace to allow the others to catch up. There is good reason to believe that developments in Uganda will parallel those in the West African countries, even though the East African natives are considerably less advanced than those in the West. However, there are further problems peculiar to Uganda posed by internal conflicts among the Baganda and by [REDACTED] concern over conditions in contiguous East African areas. The progress of Uganda toward self-government will be largely determined by the interaction and eventual resolution of such problems.

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6. At present, [REDACTED] exercise full control over Uganda through [REDACTED], who presides over the Executive and Legislative Councils. There is only limited native participation in the Councils and it is determined by appointment or indirect elections. [REDACTED] efforts to increase native participation in government were temporarily halted when the Kabaka of Buganda was exiled for advocating a separate and independent state of Buganda. The period of the Kabaka's exile, from late 1953 until 1955, was one of marked nationalist agitation.

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Following the Kabaka's return and his agreement to support the participation of Buganda in a unified state of Uganda and to accept the status of a constitutional monarch within Buganda, tensions eased and discussions were resumed. By April 1956 discussions resulted in 25X6A proposing that direct elections on a common roll be held in Buganda in 1957 and throughout Uganda in 1961. Such a schedule, if adopted, would mean that self-government for Uganda was relatively distant. The more active nationalist groups, especially in Buganda, accordingly are already demanding that a date for independence be fixed.

7. The internal quarrels in Buganda derive from the conflicting views and ambitions of the Kabaka, the Lukiko (Buganda's native legislature), and the only major political party, the Uganda National Congress (UNC), which has its own divisions and squabbles. Although somewhat hampered by the terms he accepted in 1955, the Kabaka desires absolute control and is attempting to capitalize on the popularity he gained during his exile. For their part, the Lukiko members, generally composed of the landed aristocracy, insist on the supremacy of their assembly. They and other traditional elements among the Baganda regard direct national elections as a threat to the status quo.

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8. The UNC is a predominantly Buganda party. While party membership is still small, there are indications that it is growing at a fairly rapid rate. Its current deficiencies are corrupt leadership and lack of organization, money, and discipline. The UNC was openly opposed to the Kabaka prior to his exile, but denounced [REDACTED] action and gained considerable popular support for the reversal of its position. Its nominal leader is Ignatius Musazi, who -- despite his involvement in numerous scandals -- still receives financial support from the landed aristocracy in return for his opposition to the Kabaka's efforts to reduce the influence of the Lukiko.

9. However, there is recent evidence that the UNC is gaining a more national character and that more responsible individuals are increasing their influence. These elements, led by members of the Makerere College faculty, are winning some support for country-wide nationalist agitation for a unified Uganda. An intra-party struggle now developing between the traditionalist leaders and the rising younger members may transform the UNC.

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10. Thus, [REDACTED] confront a rapidly changing situation which has elements both favorable and inimical to their policies. On the one hand, Uganda is achieving a more national character as a result of economic development and nationalist activities, thereby advancing toward

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the goal set by [REDACTED] as a precondition to independence. On the other hand, this advance has generated native demands far more sweeping than is warranted by the degree of progress. Neither Buganda feelings of superiority over the other three provinces nor the latter's fear and distrust of the Baganda have been greatly diminished; the Kabaka serves as a symbol of resistance to [REDACTED] and thus as a figurehead for the nationalist cause, but he seems basically hostile to many aspects of that cause; the interests of the new nationalist elements and of the landed aristocracy are increasingly coming into conflict. [REDACTED] may be able to capitalize on this internal conflict with a view toward restraining Buganda aspirations while improving the position of the other regions. However, it is more likely that Uganda will subordinate its conflicts to the single aim of eliminating [REDACTED] control.

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11. [REDACTED] policy will continue to be affected by concern for the situation elsewhere in East Africa. The Kenya white settlers probably will make every effort to persuade [REDACTED] to move cautiously in Uganda for fear of repercussions in their country and in Tanganyika. Moreover, in terms of their Uganda interests, [REDACTED] will have to avoid appearing to give way to Kenya settler demands and to forestall any discussion of

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an East African federation. The Uganda reaction to the Kenya situation and to the federation theme was a basic element in the Kabaka's action in 1953.

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12. In these circumstances, [REDACTED] will probably attempt to continue its present Uganda policy of granting frequent small reforms designed to move the country gradually toward self-government. The [REDACTED] will thus seek to gain sufficient time to train native administrators, encourage the creation of responsible political parties, and foster a spirit of national unity. But the future of such a policy will depend to some extent on the nature and actions of the [REDACTED] administration; the new [REDACTED] past association with Kenya and with sentiment for an East African federation does not seem propitious.

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13. In any event, stimulated by developments elsewhere in [REDACTED] Africa, Uganda nationalists will almost certainly increase their pressure for independence. It is likely that in the near future [REDACTED] either will have to set a definite date for the grant of independence or be faced with growing unrest containing the seeds of violence. There is a better than even chance that [REDACTED] will accede to such pressure and announce a schedule for independence, perhaps to be fulfilled within five years or so. Nevertheless, even such action might not be sufficient to insure

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a tranquil transition. The Communist threat in Uganda is insignificant, but in a period of rapid change in Africa -- such as the present -- Uganda can not be insulated from developments elsewhere. If the more radical nationalists now beginning to emerge should receive outside aid and encouragement, or if some development should appear to block further progress toward self-government, Uganda might enter a period of turbulence endangering the entire ^{25X6A} [redacted] position in the country.

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